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*** EECIN MESSAGE E ***

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THAT THE ASSADOR SAYS LIVING U.S. PIAS UNLIKELY

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TEXT BANGKOK, JULY 19 (APF) -- VIETNAM'S AMBASSADOR TO THAILAND SAID FRIDAY HE HAD NO IDEA WHETHER A RECENTLY RELEASED PHOTOGRAPH PURPORTING TO SHOW THREE U.S. SERVICEMEN MISSING IN ACTION DURING THE VIETNAM WAR (PIAS) WAS AUTHENTIC.

HE REITERATED, HOWEVER, HIS GOVERNMENT'S STATED POLICY THAT VIETNAM IS HOLDING NO MISSING AMERICAN SERVICEMEN.

"I CAN'T IMAGINE THAT THERE ARE ANY AMERICANS (MISSING IN ACTION) ALIVE IN VIETNAM," AMEMBASSADOR NGUYEN TRUNG SAID.

THE PHOTOGRAPH SHOWING THREE MALE CAUCASIANS TURNED UP IN ONE OF THE CAMBODIAN REFUGEE CAMPS INSIDE THAILAND BEFORE BEING SENT TO THE UNITED STATES, ACCORDING TO WELL-INFORMED SOURCES HERE.

MR. TELAG EXPRESSED SYMPATHY FOR THE FAMILIES OF MISSING SERVICEMEN AND SAID THAT MANY VIETNAMESE SERVICEMEN ARE ALSO STILL MISSING.

"EVERY DAY IN VIETNAM WE STILL HAVE THOUSANDS OF MISSING PEOPLE. EVERY DAY THEIR FAMILIES ASK FOR ASSISTANCE IN FINDING THEM," HE SAID.

"WE UNDERSTAND THE PAIN, THE BURDEN WHICH THESE PEOPLE IN THE L.O. (PEOPLES OF NAAS) HAVE TO SUFFER," HE ADDED.

THE AMBASSADOR SAID VIETNAM CONSIDERED THE PIA ISSUE A
HUMANITARIAN PROBLEM AND HIS COUNTRY HAD DONE ITS BEST TO COOPERATE
WITH THE UNITED STATES IN SOLVING IT. "IF THERE IS ANY NEW
INFORMATION WE INVESTIGATE IT," HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT INVESTIGATION TEAMS HAD TRAVELLED THROUGHOUT VIETNAM BUT HAVE FOUND NO EVIDENCE OF ANY LIVING MIAS.

ACCORDING TO THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, 2,272 U.S. SERVICEMEN ARE OFFICIALLY MISSING, 1,656 IN VIETNAM, 528 IN LAOS, 83 IN CAMBODIA, AND SIX IN CHINESE TERRITORIAL WATERS.

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